

REMARKS

The Examiner has stated that the disclosure does not contain an abstract. Applicant included an Abstract in the Preliminary Amendment filed March 4, 2002. However, Applicant is resubmitting an abstract on a separate sheet of paper.

The disclosure was objected to for informalities. Appropriate correction has been made.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for correcting the typographical error that resulted in the incorrect numbering of Claim 26.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed. Claim 1 has been amended to improve the clarity of the claim. In view of this amendment, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

Additional amendments have been made to the claims to further improve the clarity of the claims and to correct typographical errors.

Claims 2-6 were rejected as being dependent on a rejected base claim. In view of the amendment to Claim 1, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 3-4, 7-10, 12 and 19-20 were rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Lesieur US 6,620,389 B1 ('389). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicant respectfully asserts that this reference cannot be cited against the instant application due to earlier invention by Applicant as shown by enclosed certified copy of Applicant's priority document for the current application. The priority document, EP 99307065, was filed on September 6, 1999, and therefore shows invention by Applicant prior to the US filing date of the '389 reference. In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

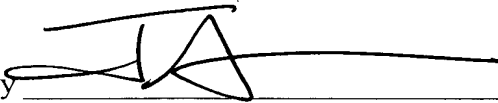
Claims 2, 5-6, 11, 13-18 and 21-26 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over the '389 reference in combination with Wentick WO98/30322. This rejection is respectfully traversed. As discussed above, the '389 document cannot be cited against the instant application. In view of this, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant believes the instant application to be in condition for allowance and respectfully requests that such action be taken.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure: certified copy of EP 99307065